

THE PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS

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"An holy priesthood."

1 Peter 2:5

IN this epistle Peter is speaking of the scattered saints in all parts of the world, and taught by the Holy Spirit, he says of them that they were "an holy priesthood." He is not talking about ministers. He is not speaking of a certain number of men who have passed through divers grades of office, and are thereby qualified to wear robes of a certain color, but he is speaking of every believer and he calls every saint a member of "an holy priesthood."

Every Mary and every John, every peasant girl and every laborer that puts his hands upon the plough, every servant of God in every capacity, is a member of this "holy priesthood"—at least so Peter says, and Peter was not mistaken, for he spake as he was "moved by the Holy Ghost."

Let us for the ten-thousandth time state our own solemn conviction, that it is time for England to wake up and solemnly rebuke the priestcraft that seems rising up in our midst. No man has any right to call himself, in any exclusive sense, a priest. When I take down the Book of Common Prayer and read, "Then shall the priest say"—I shut it up again with detestation.

And if it were the best human book ever printed and had no other blunder and error in it, yet if it ventured to call any class of men priests, I should denounce it as being tainted with Romanism. Christ is the only priest who can offer sacrifice for the expiation of sin. He is "the Great Apostle and High Priest of our profession."

But there is another priesthood—one of offering prayers and praises—and this belongs not to me because I am a minister, nor to any number of men who are called "Reverend," or "Very Reverend," or "Right Reverend," but to you as well, and to every one else who by faith has believed in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

If truly converted to God, a man though barely able to read his Bible, is a priest unto Him, because he has a new heart and a right spirit. He may never mount a pulpit, nor preside at a church meeting, but he may be a priest unto God. His only pulpit may be a cobbler's stall—his only platform for witnessing to Christ may be behind the counter or in the factory—but he is a priest for all that.

Or if the Lord call a sister to Himself, she is to be silent in the church meeting, but she belongs to the divine priesthood, and her prayers and praises will go up with as much acceptance before God, through Jesus Christ, as if she were an eminent divine, or the most gifted of the saints. All God's children are priests and this is the song of all in heaven and all on earth who are truly saved—"He hath made us kings and priests unto God, and we shall reign for ever and ever."

Now, it is on this theme of priesthood that I desire to speak tonight. And the way in which priests were made under the law of God is described for us in the eighth chapter of Leviticus. So I invite you to turn with me and look at the subject as expounded there, for surely the way in which the sons of Aaron were ordained to their earthly and temporal priesthood is richly suggestive and intentionally typical of the manner in which God calls all His people to their holy priesthood.

On turning to that chapter, we find that one of the first things with regard to the ordination of Aaron and his sons to their priesthood was that, THEY WERE CLEANSED.

We read in Leviticus 8:6, “*and Moses brought Aaron and his sons, and washed them with water.*” That was one cleansing. But several times in the chapter we find that a second cleansing was theirs and that by blood! In verse two, we find that they brought a bullock for a sin-offering, and two rams, and with the blood of one of the rams, and the blood of the sin-offering they were sprinkled, that they might be clean before God.

This powerfully teaches that every one of us aspiring to be a priest for God must first be cleansed, and that with a double purifying.

*“Let the water and the blood,
From His riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Cleanse us from its guilt and power.”*

If we look closer into this cleaning by blood, we see that Aaron and his sons put their hands upon the ram, confessing their sins. Then the ram was slain, the blood sprinkled upon the altar, and the laver, and upon all the vessels of the sanctuary, and then upon Aaron and his sons. What deep instruction is here! If we are God’s priests, we lay our hand upon Christ, accept Him as our substitute, trusting in that blood shed for the remission of sins.

He will have no priests in His sanctuary who have not been cleansed with the blood of Christ. All service until this is experienced is a vain oblation which He cannot accept. Go to the altar, confess your sin, and lay it upon the Lamb of God—and then, but not until then—can you be a holy priest.

Moreover, the priests were afterward also washed in water. On this first occasion they were cleansed from head to foot, but on later occasions when going into the tabernacle, they needed only to wash their hands and feet. So is it with our Christian life. By the Holy Spirit’s application of our Lord’s merits, believers are completely cleansed, and there remains neither spot nor wrinkle on their acceptance with Him.

But though a man is perfectly clean who leaves his bath, yet his feet may be soiled as he goes to his room and he needs to wash them again. So you and I need to pray, “Forgive us our sins,” though they have all been forgiven. We are washed, but daily defiling calls for constant cleansing. Though every true Christian has been cleansed, as was Peter, he must not say, “Thou shalt never wash my feet.”

When Jesus comes by His cleansing Word and Spirit, and girt with the towel and carrying the basin, we must be willing to let Him cleanse us—nay, beg Him to wash our feet, that we may be clean, every whit. We do need to pray, “Forgive us our sins.” It is not in the least in conflict with the doctrine of a complete sanctification or complete justification.

The priests, every one of them, were washed, they had a clear right to go into the sanctuary, yet none the less, they had to wash their hands and feet each time they entered.

So we are clean. God accepts us. We are His children and yet, day by day, we must go with the prayer to Him, “Lord cleanse me again in the Redeemer’s blood—make me pure by the washing of water by the Word.” So when defiling come, His cleansing power may be proved again and again.

Well, beloved, have we ever attempted to serve God without this cleansing? If so, may we repent of our imagined righteousness as much as of our sins, for even our righteousnesses are nothing but sins until we have been washed. Do we long for this perfect cleansing? The fountain is full—the blood, the water, have the same efficacy as they ever had.

“Though *your* sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” Step down into this heavenly bath. Trust Christ to save you and being cleansed by Him, you shall be forever a member of this “holy priesthood.”

Referring again to Leviticus 8, we see that the second thing in the ordaining of the priesthood was **THEY WERE DIVINELY CLOTHED.**

However clean they were, they must be suitably arrayed, or they cannot appear before the Lord. We have given to us, a list of the garments, and find that Aaron as High Priest was sumptuously clothed, but

not so his sons. In the thirteenth verse, we are told that they had coats, and girdles, and bonnets. Let us glance at each of these for they are packed with spiritual significance.

The “Coat” is a priestly robe. Everyone who ministered at the altar put on an ephod, a coat hanging from the shoulder, generally in one piece, and woven from the top throughout, like that which the Lord Jesus wore. So every believer is to put on the imputed righteousness of Jesus, given to us at our conversion.

He officiates as High Priest before the throne clothed in white linen, and so do all the saints—“white linen which is the righteousness of the saints,” says John in the Revelation. Now we have no righteousness of our own, but the voice from heaven speaks, “I counsel thee, buy of me white raiment that thou mayest be clothed.”

We come to Christ just as we are and He clothes us with His righteousness, active and passive, and this is the ephod in which we minister unto God. With our Lord’s righteousness clothing us, we can stand without fear before the awful searching eyes of God, now and hereafter and not fear.

*“Bold shall I stand at that great day,
For who ought to my charge shall lay,
While through Thy blood absolved I am
From sin’s tremendous curse and shame?”*

Are you, beloved, robed in the righteousness of your Savior? Then come forward and officiate as His priest!

Next to the ephod, came *the girdle*. In the case of Aaron we are told it was a “curious” girdle. Ah! how curious, how matchless, how marvelous is the girdle which encircles the loins of Christ! He is girt about the waist with a golden girdle. His faithfulness, His truth, His love, His every attribute of excellency combined, make up this curious girdle comprising the ephod.

But every other true priest has his girdle. You and I, if called to this holy office, are to have our loins girt about, standing always ready, instant to obey God’s command, and revel in His service. Orientals wore flowing garments and when these were loose, they could not hasten in their activities. So they used the girdle to brace themselves, gathering up their robes for special labor, or conflict, or flight.

So every priest of Christ must wear his girdle of faithfulness. There is a wicked world always on the watch. Be careful. Be vigilant. You may be tripped up by the sin that does so easily beset us. See to it that you are well braced, so that if the enemy came suddenly you may meet him with courage, or if a message came from your Master you may run upon it with diligence.

Yet another part of the priest’s clothing is called “the bonnet”—literally, “*the turban*.” This, so we are told, “was for glory and for beauty.” Truly our Lord has put upon His people His own glory and beauty. We are not merely acceptable, but beloved. Not passable, but admirable. Not merely not to be condemned, but full of imparted loveliness. Jesus says to every saved soul, “Thou hast ravished my heart—my sister, my spouse—with one look of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck.”

Jesus so falls in love with His own image in each saved soul, that His heart is captured. Here is “the glory and beauty” with which He has invested us. Every believer is looked upon by God as if he were Christ. Christ took your place and was cursed for you—you take Christ’s place, and notwithstanding all the blemishes, all the backslidings, all the hardness you may feel within—if you are truly in Christ, you are so clothed that glory and beauty, and that divine, is yours. The priests were not only washed but clothed. My soul, what joy is this! Ponder it until it masters and enthralls you!

After the cleansing and clothing, came this to the priests, THEY WERE ANOINTED.

This is mentioned more than once. Aaron had the holy oil poured upon his head until it ran down to the skirt of his garment. So Jesus was anointed of the Holy Spirit without measure. The other priests were also touched with the oil—sprinkled with it.

And you and I, if we have been both washed and clothed, must yet be anointed. Child of God, do you distinctly and intensely recognize your need of this anointing? If I have preached without the Holy Spirit I have preached in vain. If I have gone to my prayer chamber, no matter how earnest I desired to be, I have prayed in vain unless the Spirit of God has been upon me. This anointing is the Christian's supreme need.

Dear Joseph Irons very often used to say as he went into the pulpit, "Oh! for an unction from on high!" Sunday school teacher, you are a priest, and this is your great want—anointing. You who preach in the streets, you who are intercessors in private for Christ, you who seek to show God in your daily life—you need the anointing. What can we not do when the Spirit is in us? What can we do if He is withholding His presence and power? As God's priests we may—we must, have a daily unction—anointing—from the Holy One!

After this, THEY WERE CONSECRATED.

Here I must enlarge more than upon the last point. This setting apart to priestly function and work was very remarkable. We find that blood was taken and that Moses touched the priests with it (according to the twenty-fourth verse) first "upon the tip of the right ear, then upon the thumbs of their right hand and then upon the great toes of their right feet; and Moses sprinkled the blood upon the altar round about." This description is very full and suggestive.

Every Christian is to be consecrated to God by blood as to *his ear*. That is, we are to be eager to hear God's voice, whether in His Word printed or preached. "Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound!" They only recognize it because the blood is on the ear. We are to hear God's voice in providence. When there is a sound of going in the tops of the mulberry trees, like David, we are to be bestir ourselves. We are to be willing to hear even the rod and Him that has appointed it.

There are many voices that the sanctified ear detects that the carnal ear has never listened to. The godly man has monitions from the Most High when the natural man catches no whisper. To hear the "still, small voice" always, is the listening we should desire. So too, with regard to man, we should hear his misery and feel for it—hear his sin and pray to God for its full forgiveness as Jesus did.

Yet on the other hand, there are some sounds that the ear so consecrated must not hear. We are deaf to the insinuations of suspicion, the slander of calumny, aye! to many an intended insult that else might have provoked and angered us. May we always feel that as there was blood on the priest's ear, so all our reception powers are to be consecrated to God. If so, I shall feel that there are some books I cannot read, for I have blood on my ear—some songs I dare not listen to—some talk I dare not share in, for I have a consecrated ear. I am to use *that* for Him, for I am His priest.

Next in order was *the thumb*. This consecrated the hand. And as the ear stands for our receptive faculties, so the hand represents our active powers. There are some things we must not touch nor handle—some things we cannot do, in which we can have no hand, nay, cannot finger. Since our hand is sanctified by the blood, all it does must be pleasing to God.

I know that a common mistake is to think that you cannot serve God unless you get into a pulpit or attend a prayer meeting. Nonsense! You can truly serve God behind the counter, in the work-room—serve God by digging a ditch, or clipping a hedge. I believe that God is often served by the tailor or shoemaker who is conscientious in his calling, quite as well as by bishops and archbishops, or by men of any church in the world. At any rate, if you cannot serve God in all that you do, you have need to ask to be taught the secret of the Christian life, for that secret is the consecration of everything to Jesus Christ.

You are to make your garments, vestments, your meals sacraments, your every day a holy day, your every hour a consecrated season unto God. Our hand, with all its manifold activities, is to be consecrated—blood-marked—to Him.

After this, came *the foot*. The blood was put on the great toe of the right foot, so the feet were set apart for God. Ah! these legs of ours used to carry us to theaters! We could run fast enough the downward road with them. I recollect a man who would stand in the aisle for a long time—he said he

would “serve his legs out”—they had served the devil so long, that they should bear a little hardship for his new Lord and Master, Jesus Christ.

I know some of you who used to walk many miles to come to the house of God—six miles. I used to say to you that it was too far. It was not too far for you then, but lately it has become much too far. The road has not grown longer, but you have gone backward as to your zeal, and when the zeal declines, the miles get dolefully long.

But I have marked that when men and women are in a right state of mind and soul, it does not matter how far they walk, nor what they have to do for Christ—the consecrated feet can do it joyfully. If I have a consecrated foot, I must not let them take me into bad company. If anybody say to you, “Can you come with me to such and such a place?” You must answer, “No! I cannot. I have a foot that won’t go and I cannot go without that!”

And if any should say, “What is the matter with your foot?” say, “I have a foot that has blood upon it!” They will say, “Strange!” They will not understand you, but if you attempt to explain to them that the blood of your Lord Jesus Christ bought you and so, your foot—then they will understand that it cannot go anywhere except where Christ would have it go.

It may mean that you will have to change your position in life—you have to move and have a choice as to where you shall go. Make that choice on the principle of having a consecrated foot. Do not go where you cannot hear the pure Word of God. A Jew heard of a good business where there was much money but no synagogue—and of another where there was a synagogue though but little trade, and being a pious Jew, he chose the place with the synagogue.

I am afraid that there are but few Jews who would do that today—and quite as few Christians who think first of God’s house and the hearing of the Gospel. Better to have a dinner of herbs and the Gospel with it, than a stalled ox and not to listen to the truth of our Lord Jesus Christ. In choosing your home—in fact, in everything that concerns your progress in life—act as if you had, and knew you had, a consecrated foot!

Gathering up all, it surely teaches that a Christian is always, and everywhere, and altogether, not his own, but consecrated to Christ. Not merely to be baptized, to come once a month to the Lord’s table, to take a pew, and sit and look so heavenly-minded. Any hypocrite can do that. But it is the mark of a Christian to be so honest, upright, charitable, kind, Christlike, holy, that all who see may be compelled to say, “That man differs from other men.” The secret, though they may not discover it, is that whilst other men are but common men, where father Adam left them in the fall, this man has been found and made anew in Jesus Christ. Ear, thumb, and foot all consecrated to Christ’s service!

Hastily running through the rest of this chapter (Leviticus 8), we observe that *the consecration was very thorough*. There is mention made of unleavened bread. This teaches that a Christian is not to follow religion for the sake of honor, gain, or fame. None of the leaven of hypocrisy, or mere formalism, is to be tolerated. We are to serve Christ for Christ’s sake, and follow God because our heart is right with Him.

Again, the consecration is set forth—though I have little time to notice it—by the different parts of the victim being offered to God. You will observe that the deepest feelings of the Christian are to be with God—that the inwards and the fat of the kidneys were to be burnt upon the altar. Thus the richest and fullest emotions of the Christian’s mind and heart are to belong to God, for the fat and marrow were to be burned as well.

And the Christian’s greatest strength is to be the Lord’s, for the right shoulder was to be offered as a wave offering, and then to be consumed with fire. We are to give God our inmost thoughts, our deeper passions, our greatest strength. “Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee.” Some people can call loud enough to wake up a town when they are in their business, but when they come to pray you can scarcely hear them.

But I would have a Christian never so much, or so fine a man as when he is serving God. Give the world, if you will, the fag-ends of your mind, soul, and strength—but give God your whole man, your

inward and your outward life, every part and power and passion, strung to its greatest height and all devoted to Him!

But to conclude once more, the *Christian's consecration is to be constant*. This remarkable chapter has greatly interested me in observing that these priests were to be for one whole week officiating in the tabernacle. They were not either by day or night to leave their holy work. How they found strength enough, or whether this really included absolutely necessary seasons of rest, I cannot tell. But it says that for seven days they were to serve without intermission both by day and night.

So the Christian priesthood is to be perpetual. We are never to cease to serve God. You have heard of one that was so in love, that he did eat, and drink, and sleep for such an one. So the Christian is to “do all to the glory of God.” Says one, “Can this be done? Are we to follow Romish monks and get into a monastery?”

No! I have no doubt they are right in shaving their heads—there is probably a great necessity for it. But unless we become demented, there is no need for us to imitate their example. The Christian is not to shut himself up, and become a hermit, and think that thereby he can cultivate holiness. That is unholiness. Christian holiness is social—the light of the world, the salt of the earth. We are to be in the world, though not of it—our priesthood exercised is in the street, the shop, the family, and at the fireside. By day and night, to offer up prayers and praises and thanksgivings unto God, and so be perpetually a priest.

But what am I talking about? There are some here that have never yet been priests to God. What have they been doing today? Why even on God's holy day they do not serve Him, but themselves. Why, sir! God has never reaped a solitary ear of grain from your field. Take care lest having lived to yourself, you die to yourself—having lived without God, you die without God, and find it a tremendous thing to stand and be judged without a Savior to be your helper, or interceding priest.

I say nothing to you about being a priest to God. You need a priest for yourself, first. Do not go to any man. No man has power to help your soul, except to pray and plead for you. The saving, pardoning power lies only with Jesus Christ. Look away to Him. He died—trust in His sacrifice. He rose, He ascended—He is standing at God's right hand.

There is life for a look at Him. Look! Trust! and you shall then be cleansed, clothed, anointed, consecrated, and so serve God. But your first business is to go to Christ. Oh! may Christ come to you and save you now—and He shall have glory out of us, world without end! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

1 JOHN 2

Verse 1. *My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not.*

For this we ought to watch and strive, that we sin not.

1. *And if any man sin,—*

What then? Is it a hopeless case? Oh, no, far from it. It is a sad case, but there is a remedy for it. “And if any man sin,”—

1-2. *We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*

Come you, then, to Christ for pardon, whether you are Jews or Gentiles, whether you are saints or sinners, whether you are old or young, whether you are moral or immoral, for God is both able and willing to forgive all manner of sin because of the propitiation offered by His well-beloved Son, “Jesus Christ the righteous.”

3. *And hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.*

Obedience is the test of discipleship. Mere head knowledge is all in vain, and all in vain our fears, unless we render a practical obedience to the commandments of Christ. We shall not only savingly know Him, but we shall “know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.”

4. *He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*

This is a terrible condition for anyone to be in—to say that he knows Christ, and yet to have the Holy Spirit calling him a liar because he is not keeping Christ’s commandments. Again I remind you that obedience is essential to Christian discipleship. If we refuse to obey Christ’s commandments it is clear that we do not really know the Savior at all—we are not even beginners in the school of Christ.

5. *But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.*

When every word of His is precious to us, and when we strive to live according to His precepts, then we know that “we are in Him.” This is even more than knowing that we know Him, for it is the assurance that we are united to Him by a living connection which can never be broken.

6. *He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.* [See sermon #1732, In Him—Like Him]

What a walk would that be! How holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners is the man who tries to walk even as Christ walked.

*“Lord, I desire to live as one
Who bears a blood-bought name,
As one who fears but grieving Thee,
And knows no other shame.”*

*“As one by whom Thy walk below
Should never be forgot;
As one who fain would keep apart
From all Thou lovest not.”*

7-9. *Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning. Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.*

Love is the true test of light—that light which leads us to love God, to love Christ, to love the truth, to love God’s people, ay, and to love the whole world of men for their good—this is the love that attests the light we have to be the very light of God.

10. *He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.*

A loving spirit, kind, generous, forgiving, unselfish, seeking the good of others—this is one of the best proofs that our natural darkness has gone and that true spiritual light is within us. Some persons think very much of the doctrine of Christ, but very little of the Spirit of Christ. Let such remember that it is written, “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”

If we do not know what it is to love, then we do not in the Scriptural sense know what it is to live. We are dead. Hatred is the cerement in which the dead soul is wound up, the grave clothes in which it is put away in the tomb. But love is the garment of life in which a truly quickened spirit arrays itself. The one who is full of hatred dwells in darkness, but he that loves abides in the light. Note how love and life and light are most blessedly linked to one another.

11-13. *But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes. I write unto you, little children, because*

your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning.

“You are old men, and you like to think of old things. The everlasting love of God, the covenant made with Christ before the worlds were formed—these are things that are very dear to you—and you prize beyond all other, ‘Him that is from the beginning.’”

13. *I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one.*

“In the days of your strength, you have won the victory which no human power can ever win unaided. You have overcome that wicked one who would easily have overcome you if you had been left to fight him by yourselves.”

13. *I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.*

That is all that little children need to know at first. They may not know the great mysteries that the fathers have fathomed, they may not even know some things that the young men know, but even babes in Christ know the Father and rejoice in His love.

14. *I have written unto you, fathers, because you have known Him that is from the beginning.* [See sermon #1751, Fathers in Christ]

Twice, you see, John says the same thing about the fathers and he says nothing more concerning them. But truly, to “have known him that is from the beginning” is practically to know all that even the fathers need to know or can know, for this knowledge includes all other that is worth knowing.

14. *I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.* [See sermons #811, Unto You Young Men and #1715, A Description of Young Men in Christ]

Here again John repeats his former statement concerning the young men, but he adds to it “because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you.” There is a purpose in the repetition of each case—it is to emphasize the importance of the apostolic declarations.

15. *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.*

“Your affections are meant for something better than these transient and defiled things, so let not your heart’s love flow out to things so soiled and base. ‘Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.’”

15. *If any man loveth the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

These two things are such deadly opposites that they cannot live together. Where the love of the Father is, there cannot be the love of the world. There is no room in us for two loves. The love of the world is essentially idolatry and God will not be worshipped side by side with idols. “If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”

Does not that text draw a very sharp distinction between those who love the Lord and those who love Him not? Remember, children of God, that this is the language of John, the apostle of love—but true love is honest, outspoken, heart-searching, heart-trying. Do not imagine that there is any love to your souls in the heart of the preacher who preaches smooth things and who flatters you with his, “Peace, peace,” when there is no peace. No, the highest, deepest, most heaven-inspired love is that which searches and tries the heart lest there should be any deception there.

16. *For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*

That devil’s trinity—“the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life”—“is not of the Father, but is of the world.”

17. *And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof:*

It is only a puff, a phantom, a bubble, a mirage which will melt away as you try to approach it. There is nothing substantial in it.

17. *But he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.*

Not, “he that does some great thing to be seen of men.” Not, “he that builds a row of almshouses, or leaves a great mass of money to charity when he dies, because he could not possibly carry it away with

him.” Not, “he that sounds a trumpet before him to let everybody know what a good man he is.” Not, “he that must needs outdistance everybody else.” But “he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.” Obedience to the will of God is the pathway to perpetual honor and everlasting joy.

18. *Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.*

And now, I think, even more than when John wrote, is this the fact, for antichrists are multiplying on all sides and there are even worse evils to come than we have seen as yet. And it therefore behooves Christians to be upon the watch and to let this truth comfort them, that “it is the last time.”

Once get through this dispensation, and the battle is ended—even though the dispensation should be protracted beyond our hope and desire, yet, still, once get through it and it is over. This is to be the last charge of our great adversary and all his hosts. Stand fast, therefore, you soldiers of the cross, stand like rocks amidst the onslaught of the waves, and the victory shall yet be yours.

19. *They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.*

The worst of men go out from among the best of men. The antichrists go out from the church of Christ. The raw material for a devil was an angel. To make a Judas, you must make him out of an apostle. May God purify His professing church since even in her own loins she breeds adversaries of the faith.

20. *But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.*

The Spirit of God will teach you as you need to know. He will so instruct you that you shall know all that is for your soul’s good and for His own glory.

21. *I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.*

That which is of man’s making is false, “but the word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”

22-23. *Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.*

Some pretend to honor the Father while they dishonor the Son, but this can never really be done. Jesus truly said, “I and my Father are one,” so that he that denies the Son denies the Father also.

24. *Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.*

As it was the truth that was revealed to them at the first, there was no need of a later revelation to correct the mistakes of the first, as some foolishly and falsely teach nowadays.

25. *And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.*

Let those that want them have these novelties, these constant changes, we who believe in Jesus have something far better, even the promise of eternal life.

26. *These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.*

They would lead you astray if they could, so beware of them. “Forewarned is forearmed.”

27-28. *But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. And now, little children, abide in him;*

How John continues to urge us to stand fast in Christ. As the Holy Ghost has taught us to trust Christ, so would He have us “abide in him.” And this is one great reason why we are to abide in Him—

28-29. *That, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that everyone that doeth righteousness is born of him.*

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.